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Greatest Magazine 'Salesman' Ever?

The CIA Sits In On Harry's Mail Call



Harry Plissner Browses Among His Letters From All Over The World

... one of them tipped off State Department to a revolt in India

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THE MAIL received by one resident of Miami Beach is of intense interest to the United States government and particularly of the Central Intelligence Agency.



Periodically the CIA evaluates several hundred letters that come in weekly to Harry Plissner, a Miami Beach and New York City businessman. They pick up some

cinating clues to developments over the world.

Mr. Plissner, as it will be known, began in 1955 a program of sending used American magazines to individuals overseas, as a way to promote understanding of this country.

Acting only as middleman, Mr. Plissner writes letters to newspapers and magazines overseas suggesting that magazines are available. He writes to periodicals in this country suggesting that Americans might want to send the magazines.

When floods of responses come back to him, he simply sorts them out. No action is done.

More than a quarter mil-

lion contacts have been made when the last count was taken. Many lasting friendships have developed as a result.

BUT THIS is just part of the story. The countless letters that come directly to the Plissner home, thank-you notes and an occasional complaint of non-delivery, contain many other things. Recipients of the magazines tend to pour out their heart about local conditions, personal feelings and attitudes toward the U.S.

Some years ago letters from Kerala, India, told of a brewing revolt against the Communist government of the state. The only Red rule

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ever installed by the votes of the people.

Mr. Plissner thought it was serious enough to notify the CIA. Allen Dulles, then chief of the agency, sent an agent to Miami Beach to check on the letters.

The U.S. was thus prepared when the Communists were kicked out of Kerala. In fact, the way it was done was forecast to the last detail in the Plissner correspondence.

Now letters from the troubled Indian state indicate acute danger of a swing of the pendulum, and a Communist victory in the spring elections.

We shall soon see.

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INDONESIA is currently

in the world headlines. The Plissner correspondence tipped off the present crisis weeks ago.

For years Indonesians had been receiving magazines by the thousands every month. It was one of the bright spots in the Plissner program.

Then, last fall, complaints began to come in that the magazines were not getting through. Checking with the Indonesian embassy in Washington, Plissner was notified that the Sukarno government had banned most American magazines.

"To our regret," said Mas Soekoro, an embassy information officer, "we cannot do anything about it. We can only suggest that you advise

them that the project has been closed."

Sukarno wants no friendship with the U.S. That is official.

But he does not speak for the Indonesian people. Daily letters still reach Mr. Plissner pleading for help to let in a little light from the outside world.

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"I WISH to enjoy reading about America in a more realistic way," wrote Rocky Kwa, 16, of Tjirebon, last week.

"I hope you will be a friend to me and help me be friends with the American people," said Abdul Latif Adnan, 21, of Jogjakarta.

"I am intending to get more progress in my American knowledge," declared A. Kasasih, of Djawa Barat.

"Before and after I receive your magazines, I thank you very much for your good will," as the letter of A. Yumiarto of Sukabumi, Java, put it.

These and many others must go unanswered because Sukarno has slammed the door.

But, fortunately, the channels of communication are still open to other countries and as a result of Mr. Plissner's matching givers and receivers, thousands of old magazines are spreading the truth about the U.S. every day.

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